

MARYLAND WIC PROGRAM
VENDOR APPLICATION PACKAGE

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Attachments: Application Pages
 Maryland WIC Authorized Foods List
 WIC Vendor Agreement (2)

**PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE PACKET BEFORE COMPLETING THE
VENDOR APPLICATION**

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS WIC?

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC is a nutritional program for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, postpartum mothers, babies, and children under five years old. WIC participants must have family incomes less than 185% of the poverty level and have health problems that can be improved through good nutrition.

WIC Participants receive some of the following foods:

- ✓ Cereal
- ✓ Cheese
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ 100% Fruit Juice
- ✓ Iron-Fortified Infant Formula
- ✓ Milk
- ✓ Peanut Butter or Dried Beans, Peas, or Lentils
- ✓ Fresh or Canned Carrots Packed in Water
- ✓ Tuna Fish Packed in Water

Infants whose mothers participate in WIC weigh more when they are born and have fewer health problems than infants whose mothers did not participate. Children who participate in WIC are less likely to have anemia (blood problems) than children who don't participate.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds WIC, which is run by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Family Health Administration. WIC is administered at the local level by local WIC agencies such as Health Departments and Community Health Centers that operate throughout Maryland.

WIC is different from food stamps because participants can only buy the types and quantities of foods shown on their checks. They can't buy things like cigarettes or potato chips. Also, WIC participants can only use their checks at stores that have a signed agreement with the State WIC Agency. The stores and people who sell WIC foods are very important because they:

- ✓ Help people become healthier,
- ✓ Are part of the neighborhood making it easy for WIC participants to get there, and
- ✓ Make sure that people buy good food instead of junk food.

WIC AUTHORIZES THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF VENDORS:

- ✓ Food Store - A grocery store licensed under Code Of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.15.03 that has no pharmacy on its premises.
- ✓ Pharmacy - A drug store licensed by the State Board of Pharmacy that does not have a food store under the same ownership on its premises.
- ✓ Food Store/Pharmacy Combination - A food store and a pharmacy under the same ownership on the same premises.
- ✓ Commissary - A grocery store located on a military installation and/or owned by the Department of Defense.

HOW IS YOUR STORE PAID?

After a store has accepted a WIC check to buy WIC foods, the check may be deposited in the bank for payment. All WIC checks deposited in the bank must have a WIC vendor stamp on the front in the designated area, and an endorsement by the vendor on the back in order to be paid.

Your agreement with the Maryland WIC Program lets you accept checks only from Maryland. If you take them from another state or Washington, D.C., you must be authorized by those jurisdictions to accept their WIC checks. **The Maryland WIC Program cannot pay you for any checks other than Maryland WIC checks.**

APPLICANT'S MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for authorization as a WIC vendor, owners of retail food stores, combination food store/pharmacies, or pharmacies must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ A completed application must be received by the State Agency from a retail food store, combination retail food store/pharmacy, or pharmacy operating at a fixed location within the State of Maryland and must be accessible to the disabled. The vendor must hold a food service facility license issued by a local health department or department of environment. In order to qualify as a combination retail food store/pharmacy or pharmacy, the applicant must maintain a current registration or license issued by the State of Maryland Board of Pharmacy, or is licensed to distribute pharmaceuticals.
- ✓ If the store is not a pharmacy, it must meet the minimum stock requirements as specified in the "Required Minimum Stock" section of this Application Packet. **Minimum stock must be on the store premises as of the date and time of submission of the Vendor Application and the State Agency on-site review.** The vendor must hold a current food service facility license issued by a local health department or department of environment.
- ✓ The store must be operational at the time of the on-site review by the State Agency.
- ✓ The store must have authorization from the Food Stamp Program and may not be currently disqualified/suspended from the WIC Program or the Food Stamp Program.
- ✓ The applicant must maintain the store in a sanitary condition, with no evidence of excess un-removed rubbish, vermin, or general lack of cleanliness.
- ✓ If a combination food store/pharmacy or pharmacy, the applicant must be able to provide, within 48 hours of a request from a participant or the Program (excluding weekends and holidays), any WIC authorized infant formula.
- ✓ Except for a pharmacy or military commissary, a vendor applicant shall have actual highest current shelf prices that are less than or equal to 125% of the Peer Group average in the vendor applicant's region during the month of application, as determined by the State agency.

- ✓ The applicant must owe no outstanding payment(s) to the State Agency that are more than 90 days overdue.

Applicants not meeting the above qualification criterion will be declared unqualified, and the application will not be processed. Meeting the criterion above does not constitute authorization to redeem Maryland WIC checks with the following exception:

An applicant currently participating as an authorized vendor for which a protest/appeal of State Agency disqualification or suspension is pending a decision at the time the application is received - If the applicant meets all of the other criteria, the application will be processed.

If the result of the protest/appeal upholds the State Agency's action, the Vendor Agreement will be terminated. If the result of the protest/appeal overturns it, the Vendor Agreement will remain in effect.

HOW APPLICATIONS ARE PROCESSED

The State Agency, under current regulations, has 60 days to process an acceptable application for WIC authorization. At any time during that period, an on-site review will be conducted. The on-site review consists of checking to verify minimum stock, collecting prices, and verifying information contained on the application.

After an on-site review is conducted, the prices collected by State Agency staff are analyzed and compared to prices for other stores similar in size and geographic location. These groupings are called "Peer Groups". Currently, there are three size categories and 18 Peer Groups. They are as follows:

Region 1 consists of Allegany and Garrett Counties.

Peer Group 1, Region 1, Large Stores, 8 or more check out lanes;
Peer Group 2, Region 1, Medium Stores, 4 to 7 check out lanes;
Peer Group 3, Region 1, Small Stores, 1 to 3 check out lanes;

Region 2 consists of Frederick and Washington Counties.

Peer Group 4, Region 2, Large Stores, 8 or more check out lanes;
Peer Group 5, Region 2, Medium Stores, 4 to 7 check out lanes;
Peer Group 6, Region 2, Small Stores, 1 to 3 check out lanes;

Region 3 consists of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties.

Peer Group 7, Region 3, Large Stores, 8 or more check out lanes;
Peer Group 8, Region 3, Medium Stores, 4 to 7 check out lanes;
Peer Group 9, Region 3, Small Stores, 1 to 3 check out lanes;

Region 4 consists of Baltimore City.

Peer Group 10, Region 4, Large Stores, 8 or more check out lanes;
Peer Group 11, Region 4, Medium Stores, 4 to 7 check out lanes;
Peer Group 12, Region 4, Small Stores, 1 to 3 check out lanes;

Region 5 consists of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

Peer Group 13, Region 5, Large Stores, 8 or more check out lanes;
Peer Group 14, Region 5, Medium Stores, 4 to 7 check out lanes;
Peer Group 15, Region 5, Small Stores, 1 to 3 check out lanes;

Region 6 consists of Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Saint Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Peer Group 16, Region 6, Large Stores, 8 or more check out lanes;
Peer Group 17, Region 6, Medium Stores, 4 to 7 check out lanes;
Peer Group 18, Region 6, Small Stores, 1 to 3 check out lanes.

Your store's prices are only compared to other store's prices in your Peer Group. This ensures that your stores prices are fairly evaluated. **If it is determined that your store's prices exceed the Peer Group average, you will be advised in writing.**

If your store's prices are determined to be acceptable, and all other authorization criteria have been met, you will be notified in writing that your application has been approved. You will also be advised of when to attend New Vendor Training. New Vendor Training is mandatory and provides important instructions for processing WIC transactions.

Upon completion of training, you will receive your vendor identification stamps. All approved applicants receive 2 self-inking stamps uses to affix the Vendor Identification Number on WIC checks in the designated area. If your vendor stamps are lost, become damaged, or wear out, you are responsible for replacement.

If for any reason your store's application is denied, you will receive written notification of the reason for denial and advised of your right to appeal. If a store

is denied authorization four times, the applicant vendor cannot reapply for WIC authorization until 1 year after the last denial date.

MILITARY COMMISSARIES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Defense have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to clarify the basic responsibilities of the State WIC agencies or their designated local agencies and military commissaries authorized to be WIC vendors.

Military Commissaries, as federal entities, are exempt from some State requirements; however, the State WIC Agency may still authorize them as WIC vendors pursuant to CFR §246.12(f)(1) of the federal regulations for the WIC Program, which permits modification of the Vendor Agreement. A commissary will be required to submit application information to the Program by the deadline if one is given.

MINIMUM STOCK REQUIREMENTS

Retail food stores and combination retail food store/pharmacies applying for authorization to participate in the WIC Program must have on the premises of their stores at all times a minimum amount of WIC authorized foods in the brands and container sizes approved by the Program for purchase by WIC participants.

Listed below are the foods and amounts that a retail food store or combination food store/pharmacy must have on their premises. **Formula information given is for retail stores only.** Please refer to the current WIC Authorized Foods List included with this packet for additional information on WIC approved brands, varieties, and container sizes and types.

Fluid Milk:

3 varieties for a total of 24 gallons

Evaporated milk:

1 brand – sixteen 12-ounce cans

Nonfat dry milk:

1 brand for a total of 4 pounds

Eggs:

Medium or Large – 1 brand – 12 dozen

Domestic Cheese:

4 varieties for a total of 24 pounds

Canned Juice:

2 brands/2 varieties – twenty-four – 46-ounce cans

Frozen Concentrate Juice:

2 brands/2 varieties – twelve – 10 to 12 ounce cans

Infant Juice:

3 varieties – fifteen 32-ounce containers

Adult Cereal:

6 varieties for a total of 288 ounces

Infant Cereal:

2 varieties for a total of 128 ounces

Peanut Butter:

1 brand – six 18-ounce jars

Dry Beans, Peas, or Lentils:

1 brand/3 varieties – Ten 16-ounce packages

Tuna fish packed in water:

1 brand – six 5.5 to 6.5 ounce cans

Fresh Carrots:

1 brand – five 1 pound packages

Canned Carrots:

1 brand – five cans 16-ounces or less

Infant formula:*Milk based*

Liquid Concentrated Enfamil w/Iron	31 – 13 ounce cans
Liquid Concentrated Enfamil w/Iron Lipil	31 – 13 ounce cans
Powdered Enfamil w/Iron	4 – 14.3 ounce cans
Powdered Enfamil w/Iron Lipil	4 – 12.9 ounce cans

Soy based

Liquid Concentrated Prosobee	31 – 13 ounce cans
Liquid Concentrated Prosobee Lipil	31 – 13 ounce cans
Powdered Prosobee	4 – 14.3 ounce cans
Powdered Prosobee Lipil	4 – 12.9 ounce cans

Pharmacies and combination retail store/pharmacies must be able to provide, within 48 hours of a request from a Participant or the Program (excluding weekends and holidays), any other formula as prescribed on the WIC check.

VENDOR APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please carefully read and follow the instructions provided for completing your application for WIC authorization.

- ✓ Clearly print or type your answers.
- ✓ Fill in all blanks. If a particular question does not apply to your store, write "N/A" for Not Applicable.
- ✓ List the names of all of the owners of the store. If the store is incorporated, write the name of the corporation and list the names of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and the address of the corporation.
- ✓ Utilize your store's last federal or state tax form to provide gross annual sales. If the store is new, provide an estimate. This information will be kept confidential.
- ✓ Sign and date each application. Vendor applications must be signed and dated to be valid.
- ✓ Sign, date, and return each Vendor Agreement (included in this packet). One will be returned to you at the time of authorization.

Failure to provide accurate information will result in unnecessary delays in processing your application. If it is determined that false information was provided, the application will be denied and the applicant will be prohibited from reapplying for 1 calendar year from the submission date of application.

Receipt of Applications

Applications may be hand delivered or mailed. Send or deliver the applications to:

JoAnn McGowen
Office of the Maryland WIC Program
201 W. Preston Street, Room 103
Baltimore, MD 21201

If you have questions or difficulty completing this application, please contact Ms. McGowen at 410-767-5251 or toll free at 1-800-242-4982 for assistance.

FAXED APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED